

New ?School Garden Guide? Released to Support Garden-based Learning for DC Students



The United States Botanic Garden (USBG), the Offi

Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and City Blossoms are celebrating Earth Day with the release of the newly developed guidance document; "Growing Strong: A Comprehensive Guide to Support all School Garden Programs in the District."

Across the District, new school gardens are being established and existing school gardens are being enhanced to provide students with high-quality garden-based learning experiences. USBG, OSSE, and City Blossoms recognize the value of garden-based learning and the need for clear and accessible guidance to support school garden programs. This guide is for teachers, school administrators, community-based organization staff, community members, and parents who are looking for strategies to integrate garden-based learning into various subject areas outdoors.

"We know that healthy bodies and healthy minds are the foundation of academic success," said Dr. Heidi Schumacher, OSSE assistant superintendent. "As students are spending more time learning in front of screens, OSSE recognizes the opportunity for students to go outside and learn in nature. As schools embrace garden-based learning, school gardens can be great places for students to have these types of meaningful engagements."

"School gardens are vital community resources for connecting young people to the importance of plants. They are places for joyful learning and memorable experiences with plants, food and the natural world," said Dr. Saharah Moon Chapotin, USBG executive director. "We are excited to offer this guide via this great collaboration."

"This guide is an important document that lays a path for establishing a sustainable and impactful school garden program. Any group getting ready to launch a school garden program would benefit from it! We were thrilled to be a part of its creation and to collaborate with our partners at the U.S. Botanic Garden and the District of Columbia Superintendent of Education," said Tara McNerney, Executive Director, City Blossoms.



of schools with gardens to 110. Additionally, there were 14,362 students and 787 teachers who engaged in garden-based learning.

The collaborators hope this resource can serve as an example for school garden support organizations throughout the United States. This guidance document is a [Greenhouse Manual](#) that was developed and released by the USBG, City Blossoms, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology to help educate schools and communities on how to build and maintain school greenhouses for educational purposes.

"Growing Strong: A Comprehensive Guide to Support all School Garden Programs in the District" is available [here](#).

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Photos available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/by5zewsw017t25u/AABhTSZFdEzTSKfwkyb2YsVRa?dl=0>

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About the U.S. Botanic Garden

The United States Botanic Garden (USBG) is the oldest continuously operating public garden in the United States. The Garden informs visitors about the fundamental value and diversity of plants, as well as their aesthetic, cultural, economic, therapeutic, and ecological significance. With over a million visitors annually, the Garden strives to demonstrate and promote sustainable practices. The U.S. Botanic Garden is a living plant museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a member of Conservation International. www.usbg.gov

About the Office of the State Superintendent of Education

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the state education agency for the District of Columbia charged with raising the quality of education for all residents. OSSE serves as the District's liaison to the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Agriculture and works closely with the District's charter schools to achieve its key functions.

About City Blossoms

City Blossoms is a nonprofit that cultivates the well-being of their communities through creative programming in kid-driven gardens. Applying their unique approach to art, healthy living, and community building, they "blossom" in neighborhoods where kids, their families, and neighbors may not otherwise have access to green space. For more information on City Blossoms, their programming, resources and trainings, visit www.cityblossoms.org and email info@cityblossoms.org

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